

Ron Liggett

State Representative • District 33

1999 Session of the Indiana General Assembly

State budget provides tax cuts, funding for education

The new state budget will make a very real difference in the lives of many Hoosiers. Some of the highlights include:

Program Funding

- **CHOICE:** \$5 million increase per year in funding for home health care for the elderly
- **Vocational education:** incentives for school corporations to provide programs in which high employment demand exists
- **A new \$50 million 21st Century Research and Technology Fund** that will promote high-tech industries located in Indiana
- **Social services:** Funding for the seriously mentally ill is increased by \$3 million in 2000 and \$6 million in 2001. MRDD programs will receive an additional \$9 million in funding.



Rep. Liggett and Gov. Frank O'Bannon.

Hoosiers will save \$672 million over the next two years in tax cuts

- **Property tax cuts:** Elimination of county welfare fund and county welfare administration funds from local property taxes (two-year savings: \$67.6 million)
- **Inventory tax cuts:** Elimination of inventory tax for 87 percent of farms and businesses (two-year savings: \$129.6 million)
- **Homeowners:** a new income tax deduction for property taxes up to \$2500
- **Senior citizens:** an increase in the income tax deduction from \$1000 to \$1500 and an increase in the property tax deduction for seniors from \$1000 to \$2000
- **Dependent children:** an increase in the income tax deduction from \$1000 to \$2500
- **Small businesses and farmers:** property tax “add-back” repealed so farmers and business owners can deduct the amount of their property taxes from their state income taxes
- **Renters:** increased the income tax deduction from \$1500 to \$2000

Additional \$200 million approved for Indiana roads

I was pleased we appropriated an additional \$200 million from the state general fund for local roads over the next two years. This is in addition to the regular funding from gas taxes. Many of you have indicated your strong desire to see us do more road improvements throughout the state.

I have included the breakdown for our district in the box at the right. The amounts listed for each city are in addition to the total for the county. The amount appropriated to each city is based on the population of the city.

New road money for District 33			
Jay County	\$565,416	Randolph County	\$761,631
Bryant	\$3,574	Farmland	\$14,239
Dunkirk	\$27,689	Losantville	\$3,710
Pennville	\$9,330	Lynn	\$12,661
Portland	\$71,136	Modoc	\$3,063
Redkey	\$17,002	Parker City	\$14,747
Salamonia	\$3,012	Ridgeville	\$11,547
Delaware County	\$1.7 million	Saratoga	\$3,961
Albany	\$61,750	Union City	\$38,797
Muncie	\$1.7 million	Winchester	\$52,694
Selma	\$22,290	Blackford County	\$358,771

Education

ISTEP Gateway Examination -- House Enrolled Act 1050 allows students who do not pass the ISTEP Gateway Examination to graduate, provided they meet certain other requirements. The legislation also provides that the case conference committee determines eligibility for graduation of certain students with disabilities. The act also provides that all students in Grade 10 must take the examination.

Reading Skills -- Senate Enrolled Act 632 establishes a reading diagnostic program designed to improve skills among younger students. The program allows children in first and second grades to receive an individualized plan if it is determined they are having difficulty reading.

Educational Standards -- A roundtable has been created to develop educational standards for Indiana students. Standards would be set for each grade level, easily comparable to national and international standards, written in an easy-to-understand manner, and distributed to students and parents.

Postsecondary Proprietary Education Grants -- Combines the higher education award program for students at postsecondary proprietary educational institutions with the award program for students at other institutions of higher learning.

\$1.1 million in Build Indiana funding for District 33

I worked with Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate to secure funding for many local projects.

- Bryant Community Center -- \$30,000
- Albany Fire Department -- \$45,000
- Jay County Fair -- \$100,000
- Jay County Fire Departments -- \$125,000
- Parker City Community Park -- \$35,000
- Randolph County Historical Museum -- \$150,000
- Randolph County 4-H Pavilion & HVAC for Husted Hall -- \$100,000
- Farmland Fire Department -- \$50,000
- Redkey Fire Department -- \$25,000
- Dunkirk Playground -- \$25,000
- Jay County Historical Museum Renovation -- \$40,000
- Lynn Historical Museum -- \$25,000
- Randolph County Clock Tower Project -- \$25,000
- Ridgeville Downtown Redevelopment -- \$30,000
- Bryant Fire Station Improvements -- \$75,000
- Parker City Fire Station Property Acquisition -- \$50,000
- Randolph County EMS Ambulance -- \$35,000
- Ridgeville Fire and Rescue Building and Equipment -- \$150,000
- Winchester Fire Department Rescue -- \$20,000

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Call the Statehouse Toll-Free
1-800-382-9842

House publications available

The following publications can be requested free of charge from my Statehouse office by calling toll-free 1-800-382-9842:

Relax . . . -- This informational booklet for senior citizens discusses a variety of issues, from taxes to health problems to leisure activities.

Higher Education -- A 24-page publication for those interested in pursuing a higher education degree, detailing many Indiana colleges and universities as well as occupational and vocational schools.

Guide to State Agencies -- This booklet details various agencies within Indiana state government, listing phone numbers, functions and general areas of responsibility for each of the state agencies.

Hoosier Fun and Facts -- Designed for elementary school-aged children, this information and activity book teaches students about their state through a combination of text, puzzles and other educational activities.

Is the address label on this mailing correct?

Please check the address label on this mailing for accuracy. If there are any errors or if you are receiving duplicate mailings, please contact my office at 1-800-382-9842. Every effort will be made to correct the mistake.

I appreciate your assistance in keeping the mailing list updated. This will ultimately result in more efficient delivery and substantial savings to taxpayers across the state.

State Phone Numbers

State Information	1-800-457-8283
Indiana House	1-800-382-9842
Indiana Senate.	1-800-382-9467
Governor's Office.	317-232-4567
Secretary of State	317-232-6531
Motor Vehicles.	317-233-6000
Natural Resources.	1-800-622-4931
Utility Regulatory.	1-800-851-4268
State Tourism	1-800-289-6646
Department of Correction. .	1-800-680-5889
Department of Education . .	317-232-6611
Department of Health	317-233-1325
Family & Social Services . .	317-233-4454

Liggett authors BMV, telephone legislation

BMV accountability -- I authored amendments in Senate Bill 323 and Senate Bill 538 to require greater accountability from the Bureau of Motor Vehicles in the operation of license branches across Indiana.

These amendments required the BMV to keep open all license branches presently in operation and require the State Ethics Commission to study the methods used to build or lease new branches. They were inspired in part by the recent announcements that the BMV wanted to close branches in Dunkirk, Parker City and Union City, among other places, in order to cut costs and reduce a deficit estimated as high as \$10 million.

When the BMV first announced its plan, I thought closing branches would make problems with long lines and slow service even worse. My amendment required the BMV to bite the bullet and not rely on closing bureaus or dipping into motor vehicle highway funds to eliminate the deficit. If there are problems, they should not be addressed through cutting services.

In our district, there are six branches. The BMV wanted to close three, and it already has built new facilities for the other three, even though there is ample empty office space in Albany, Portland and Winchester to handle these operations.

Many of these existing facilities can be rented at relatively low cost. However, the BMV seems more interested in putting up new buildings that are less accessible to the public. If we are looking at cutting costs, new construction is not an option that should be seriously considered. I agreed to

withdraw my amendments when I was assured by the Commissioner of the BMV that no branches would be closed and that the BMV would cooperate with a special in-depth summer study by the General Assembly of their operations.

Local calling plan approved -- Jay and Randolph County residents no longer will have to pay long-distance charges for calls within their home counties. I worked with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission (IURC) to approve a local calling plan that will take effect in both counties, once the proper equipment has been installed.

Originally, I filed legislation that would have prohibited telephone companies from charging customers long-distance rates on any call made within a county.

GTE came up with a local calling plan after the bill was publicized and the IURC elected to give the proposal its blessing.

The new plan is being implemented, though there have been delays because of equipment installation and internal communication problems within GTE.

This plan merely enacts the sort of common sense thinking that should be the rule. I don't think a parent should have to make a long-distance call in order to find out how a child is doing in school. I don't believe a person should have to call long-distance to reach the county courthouse to get an answer to a question about taxes.